THE TWO SALOMES.

XI.

CONFESSION.

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The girl had placed herself in her chair by the desk. She had taken off her broad hat and turned her face fully toward her employer, who was looking at her with a mild interrogation in her glance.

"But I ought not to take up your time," said Salome hesitatingly. "Perhaps I will wait until the dictation is over."

"Oh, no," was the return; "I said we would talk a little first. You are looking very well this morning, Miss Gerry. You seem not to have a care in the world."

Salome smiled happily.

"That's what my mother said when I left her, and it seemed to be such a comfort to her."

"I should think so, indeed. And you are really getting well?"

"Thank you, yes. I am well. My cough is gone. I am just living now—for the first time."

Mrs. Darrah contemplated her companion in sympathetic silence.

"It is not life at all—the life of an invalid," went on Salome, speaking with unusual freedom. "I don't see how I endured it up home. It was always that I must not do this for it might overtax me; I must not do the other thing for fear that—oh, dear! And I was always wondering if my cough would be better at night, or would the early morning air be too bracing? And I must eat things that would make blood. And my view of the world was so narrow, and I was so given to self-examination. Oh, I was a miserable, narrow little thing. But that girl is buried somewhere up in New-England, where she lived. Do you think she will ever come to life again, Mrs. Darrah?"

Instead of replying, Mrs. Darrah remarked:

"You interest me so much. And I thought I knew all the girls and young men long ago."

Salome went on in the same tone she had been using, and with much the same expression of face.

"But I mustn't talk about myself so much. I'm sure to be a bore if I do that, because, as Miss Nunally says, then other people can't talk about themselves. She says that's what everybody wants to do. I was going to tell you that I put your name to one of your blank checks in your check-book a few days ago."

Salome gazed calmly but with undisguised interest at her employer.

Mrs. Darrah suddenly left her cushions and sat upright. Then she sank back upon them and responded:

"I suppose you wanted to see how well you could do it. Let me look at it."

"But I have sent it to my father. He needed the money."

"What!"

Mrs. Darrah sat upright again.

"He needed the money," repeated Salome.

Mrs. Darrah gazed a moment in silence. Then she said:

"Hand me my notebook, please; the blue one."

But Mrs. Darrah did not immediately write in the book. She held it in her hand, while she gazed at the girl, who returned her gaze in a shy but self-possessed manner.

"Does your mother know?" at length asked the woman.

"Oh, no."

"Why didn't you tell her?"

"Because I knew she would be unhappy about it. She would think I had done wrong."

Here Mrs. Darrah fell to writing rapidly a few lines.

Presently she looked up. "And what do you think about it yourself?" she asked.

"Well," reflectively, "intellectually I know it is wrong, but somehow I don't have any feeling about it."

"Oh, you don't have any feeling about it?"

Mrs. Darrah wrote again. Her keen, small eyes were like sparks of light now.

"Does your father know?" Salome rose impulsively. Her eyes flashed. But she resumed her seat directly.

"No. Do you think I should let him know? I had to—to prevaricate. I wrote that a rich friend would lend the sum. And you know I was sure you would let me work out the amount."

"Oh, you were sure of that?"

"Yes. And there was no time. You had a headache that morning. I thought I would talk with you about it. I can work out the amount, and father, nor mother either, need never know anything concerning the affair."

"May I ask what the sum is?"

As she put this question Mrs. Darrah had in her mind fifty or a hundred dollars.

"Eight hundred dollars," was the answer.

"Good heavens!" Mrs. Darrah's face darkened somewhat. As Portia had once explained, this woman, while she was generous, was yet fond of her money.

"It was a mortgage on the farm," calmly went on Salome, "and father would have kept up the interest, only I've been such an expense to him. I felt as if I were responsible, you see. And I will work it out. I'm perfectly willing to work it out. I've meant to do that. I shall be able to use shorthand in a month or two, and I do hope, Mrs. Darrah, I can be very useful to you. I'm sure I can be."

An enthusiasm began to shine in the girl's face.

Mrs. Darrah made an effort to retain the calmness which had threatened to leave her. But she could not yet lean back on her cushions.

"Have you an idea how long it will take you to pay me at your present salary?" she inquired.

"Oh, yes," cheerfully; "I've reckoned it precisely."

"You have?" Mrs. Darrah spoke rather helplessly.

"Certainly."

"But I may not want you all the time. Do you think I write every week in the year? And perhaps I shall decide not to have you work for me."

"If you do that I can still work somewhere," with gay courage came the answer.

Mrs. Darrah now gave up trying to be calm. She had never been so surprised in her life. She began walking about the room.

"I suppose you know what you are, Miss Gerry?" she said after a moment, stopping before the girl.

"What I am?" inquiringly.

"Yes; that you are a forger; neither more nor less."

Salome was silent for a space. She lowered her eyes.

"Yes," she said, raising her glance as she spoke; "I suppose that is the name of it. But it was for father, and I was sure you would allow me to make up the sum to you."

"But the sin of it?"

"Yes," repeated Salome, "of course there is the sin of it. I knew that, as I said, intellectually. But I did not care, in my heart, for that. You had plenty of money. I was sure you would not suffer until I could pay you."

Mrs. Darrah paused by her couch where she had dropped her notebook. She snatched it up and wrote in it as if she must in some way relieve her excitement.

She turned to the girl. "But your conscience? Where is your conscience, Miss Gerry?"

"That is what I ask myself," was the reply. "I think I must have left it in New-England."

"You used to have one?"

"Oh, yes; and it was a very good one, too, for it was continually troubling me."

Mrs. Darrah now threw her notebook on the couch, apparently that she might clasp her hands.

"Oh, if I could only work this out!" she exclaimed. "I would astound the critics."

Salome looked at her companion wonderingly.

"Do you mean anything about me?" she asked.

"I mean everything about you," was the answer.

The girl seemed puzzled. She remained silent, watching her employer as she moved about the room. After a while Mrs. Darrah paused in front of Salome.

"Have you anything more to say?" she asked.

"I don't know that I have. Yes; I suppose I ought to tell you that I am sorry."

"Not unless you are sorry," said the elder woman, who now returned to her couch and who arranged the cushions there with a great appearance of interest. But she kept up her watch of the girl.

Salome began to speak slowly, but soon was enunciating rapidly, as was her habit, as if the words came too fast to be spoken.

"You remember," she said, "that I said—or did I only think it?—that intellectually I know it was wrong. I know that just as well as you can tell me. But then, suddenly, I knew how my father was suffering, and I knew he never could pay the money himself; and there was your check book; and I could write your name, and you were rich; I had not the least feeling that held me back, and I haven't now, and I don't think I ever shall have."

"The sin of it doesn't trouble you?"

"No."

"Even Portia wouldn't have done that," remarked Mrs. Darrah suddenly.

Salome made no reply. She was absorbedly engaged in considering herself as a third person, and in trying to decide what she should think of that third person. But she gave up the attempt without having come to any decision.

"And Portia would do some strange things for money and what money brings," went on Mrs. Darrah, following out her thought. "For instance, she would legally sell herself to a man whom she dislikes. But then, she is not peculiar in that."

Salome, hearing this, could not restrain a gesture of disgust.

Mrs. Darrah was watching her. She again wrote in her notebook, the blue one, which contained the hints concerning feminine nature.

"I see you still retain the fine 'Daphnean instinct,'" she said. "But who can tell how soon you may drop that?"

"Oh, Mrs. Darrah!" cried Salome with keenest remonstrance; and now she blushed, which was a rare occurrence for her. As she felt the blood rush to her face she thought of Miss Nunally's question, "Why do you never blush?" and the blood came up more hotly than ever as she recalled those words.

"I hope you will allow me to pay that money," said the girl after a pause. "It is much more reasonable that I should work and earn money now than that father should have to do it. I am young. And, somehow, father never could get money together like some men. I shall be so glad to help him. You will be sure to see that father nor mother never finds this out, won't you, Mrs. Darrah?"

This question was put with a confiding earnestness that acted like a sudden clutch upon Mrs. Darrah's well-worn heart.

She did not reply immediately. When she did speak, it was to put another question.

"Have you reflected that an act of this kind, that any crime, makes falsehood necessary?"

"No. That is, I had not thought much about it."

"Do you care whether you lie or not, Miss Gerry?"

"How can I say? Of course I know it was a lie to put your name to that check."

"Certainly."

"Well, I don't care about that: only I care intensely that father and mother should not know it. They would feel so much, you see."

"Naturally."

By this time Mrs. Darrah had made her decision concerning the money. She was very wealthy; still, even wealthy people do not enjoy having a sum stolen from them. But in this woman the author in search of material was very strong, and she was vitally interested as to how this would "turn out." She felt that it was better than any novel she had ever read; far better than any she should ever write. Would this prove only one instance of curious moral aberration, or was it the first in the process of moral deterioration? And all this talk of the girl about her conscience? Of course, her conscience had never been a healthy one. It must have been deeply unhealthy, as were the consciences of some invalids, particularly if they were women who had been brought up with an eye specially to the conscience.

And what had there been in the history of Salome's immediate ancestors? And what prenatal influences? Was Mrs. Darrah about to come upon something that should explain what she called the different faces of the girl?

With these thoughts in her mind Mrs. Darrah now spoke:

"I should like to see your mother."

Salome became very pale, But she said steadily:

"You do not mean to tell her?"

"No."

"What shall be the arrangement?"

"This: I shall allow you to borrow that money. But your mother must know why you seem to receive no salary from me. Tell her the whole story, except that you used my name. Show her your father's letter, for, of course, you have not shown it to her. Tell her I lend you the sum, and you repay me as you can. I will see that the check is not disputed."

"Oh, how good you are!" cried the girl.

"Very," was the satirical response. "Don't be grateful."

"But I feel so grateful, Mrs. Darrah."

"I suppose so. Now, I want to see your mother. We will not write to-day. Go out there where you live—ask your mother to call upon me this afternoon about five. I will send a carriage for her if she cannot walk."

"She will gladly walk," was the reply. "And I will tell her what you said about the money?"

"Yes. Now, good-bye until to-morrow at nine."

Salome left the room. As she emerged from the hotel she stopped by one of the fountains. A rush of sweet air came from a garden of roses.

The girl lifted her head and inhaled the perfume. She stood by the fountain and smiled to herself.

The woman whom she had just left remained on her couch a moment. Then she rose and pressed the button of the bell. She requested the servant to ask Miss Nunally to come to her.

When she had done so she said to herself that she felt as if she should go wild if she stayed there alone and thought another moment.

Portia came in, not in the most perfect good nature.

"Do you want anything particularly, Aunt Florence?" she inquired. "I was reading one of your novels."

"Novels are very insignificant things when compared to real life," was the rather startling response.

"Not your novels, aunt, dear," replied Portia, "and, besides, I was just getting sleepy, and I must restore myself somehow if I am to see Major Root this evening."

"You are always talking about yourself, Portia," fretfully.

"No. But sometimes I do like to speak of a subject of real interest to me. What's the matter, any way? And where is Salome Gerry? You actually look excited, Aunt Florence."

"Do I? I'm thinking about a new novel."

Portia yawned.

"I have almost made up my mind not to go on with the novel of sentiment, but to begin one about ——"

Portia yawned again.

"I wish you'd stop doing that, Portia. It is very annoying when I am talking. Did you see Miss Gerry when she left?"

"No. Why?"

"I was going to ask how she looked."

"Why, how should she look?" in surprise.

"That's what I don't know in the least. That's what I should like to find out," said Mrs. Darrah.

Portia now showed some interest.

"Aunt, it is too much for you to write novels. Can't you stop it?"

"Stop it!—with material thrust into my hand?"

"I know it is asking a great deal. But you certainly do give me the idea this morning that novel-writing is too much for you."

Portia gave a scrutinizing gaze about the room. In spite of her yawning, and the sound of her words as they are set down on paper, she did not have the appearance of being impolite, and she rarely did have that appearance. She possessed the power, in remarkable degree, of being insolent under eht garb of politeness. Not that her aunt cared whether she were insolent or not. There was a certain aroma of personal presence about Portia Nunally that made one forgive a vast deal in her which would have been unforgivable in another. And when Portia chose to be deferential and winning, when she felt like letting her eyes dwell on you in a way her eyes had, then you could hardly be blamed if you lost your head a little. When you came fully to understand that she was conscious of this way her eyes had, then possibly you began to regain your head a little. But there had been cases when it required a long time for this last desirable consummation to be reached. Men and women alike were her victims. The way she put it, however, was that she was the victim of men and women alike. "On the whole, though," she said once when in a mood of confession, "I like women better. Women know things. You can absolutely rely upon scores of women to know instantly why you talk one way only for the reason that you feel the opposite. There's a great comfort in that. And then the extreme surprise that comes to a well regulated, properly brought up young woman when she finds that she is in love with another woman—me, for instance. Of course, if she doesn't know it isn't really love, and often she doesn't, there will be plenty to tell her. Sometimes it requires quite a good deal of argument to convince her that if she were in love with a man it would be the real thing. For, don't you see, between men and women 'love for an hour is invariably love forever'; but in all other cases it is an ephemeral, spurious, abnormal article." Here Portia's eyes would dilate, and she would laugh in a way that might possibly make her hearer shiver slightly. Or she would not laugh, but would lean toward you and smile right into your eyes in such a manner that you felt imperatively moved to find out what kind of a girl she was.

But when a woman is nearly thirty, when she has eyes with a dash of green in them, with thick light lashes, when she is a yellow blonde with very scarlet lips—why, then, it is next to impossible for a man or woman to find out, unscathed, what sort of a person she is. One unfortunate result of a study of character under these circumstances is that presently you do not care in the least whether you are scathed or unscathed; and you are never precisely the same after such a process of education.

This girl was superlatively sensitive and intuitive. It was not necessary to be that in such a degree for her to perceive that simething unusual had happened just now in this room. The longer she sat there the more interested she became, and the less she felt like yawning.

She moved uneasily. She noted Mrs. Darrah's rather set face.

"I feel my hair beginning to rise on my head," she remarked at last. "I am almost sure there is a spook in this room somewhere."

"Don't be silly," said her aunt.

Portia was silent a moment. Then she started in a dramatic manner she had:

"There is something materializing in Miss Gerry's chair," she exclaimed. "Really, Aunt Florence, if you don't tell me why you sent for me, I may go into a state of self-imposed hypnotism in spite of myself."

"I sent for you, Portia, because I have had such a shock that I wanted to divert my mind," was the answer, "and sometimes you can be very diverting."

"Oh, thank you. Did Miss Gerry give you material in a very unexpected manner, or did she have hemorrhage of the lungs?"

Portia glanced about her as if she might see some token of that hemorrhage.

"Portia," said Mrs. Darrah with solemnity, "what is your idea of conscience?"

The girl sat upright with a quick movement.

"Aunt Florence," she answered, "I haven't an idea of conscience."

She asked almost immediately: "Have you got into trouble with Miss Gerry's conscience?"

"Don't ask irrelevant questions," was the response. "I suppose, Portia, you have an idea that some things you would do, and some things you would not do?"

"Certainly; when you put it in that way, Aunt, I find you quite lucid, and I can answer you," replied the girl, "but first, don't you want your notebook, the blue one?"

"No, I don't."

"It is rather irritating that I am never material to you, Aunt."

"I've known you too long. Now, what would you do, and what wouldn't you do?"

Portia considered; at last she answered:

"The things I would do are so very many that I can't begin to tell. But there are a few things I would not do."

"Well, what are they?" with interest.

"The first that occurs to me is that I would not, for the world, wear my hair in that abominable Greek way which that Stacy girl thinks so fine. And I wouldn't have those ugly gathers in the skirt of my frock—not though they were ten times the fashion. If you will give me half an hour in which to collect my thoughts, ma tante, I will tell you more things that I would not do."

Portia's face was full of mischief; but it was full of interest also.

Mrs. Darrah was now gazing coldly and concentratedly at her niece, but she was thinking of the face of the other girl who had so lately left her.

"You would steal from a wife her husband's love?" she questioned.

"Yes," promptly, "but that kind which could be stolen would not be very precious—and it would be quite fun to steal hers."

"You would steal her purse or her necklace, or forge her name?"

"Oh, dear, no, indeed!" Portia did not try to conceal her amazement. Then she endeavored to smile as she once more offered to get the blue notebook. She said it seemed to her that it was surely a fitting time for the blue notebook. Then she shrugged her shoulders and remarked that there were occasions when she could wish that she were not the niece of an authoress. After this she inquired if Aunt Florence were rehearsing a plot, or trying on a chapter, and could she assist her in any other way? Should she put on her new evening dress and pose?

"The amount of it all is," exclaimed Mrs. Darrah without noticing the girl's words, "that we do not in the least know what we are, nor what we would do."

"Now I agree with you; now you speak truth," responded Portia; and she could not help adding, "won't you write a novel about that, Aunt Florence?"

"I wish you would go away," said Mrs. Darrah. "I want to think."

Without speaking again Portia obeyed. She strolled out into the court, and she also stood by a fountain amid the luxuriance of Southern shrubbery, as Salome had done a half hour before. But Portia's face was not as care free as Salome's face had been. There were some lines on it now which, in spite of the great beauty and fairness of its skin, made the girl look more than her years.

Presently she walked out into that portion of the grounds which Miss Gerry would be likely to pass through. She had a wish to meet Miss Gerry and to ask her a few questions.

But she did not find her. Salome had not lingered long. She had walked out through the sand in a state of calm and content. She was in haste to see her mother and to explain, as Mrs. Darrah had suggested.

It was time now to hear from her father. He would be sure to write as soon as he had received her letter. By to-morrow morning, when the Northern mail came in, she would hear.

Though she was in haste, yet the girl did not hurry. It was not easy to hurry. She was even sometimes tempted to linger, but she kept on, the air coming balmily to her lips, and to her lungs, which expanded now with an unconsidered ease. She had been as ready to forget that she had ever been ill, as we all are ready to do that when health comes back to us.

She saw her mother sitting sewing in the doorway with the hound lying at her feet. The door was not yet hung, but was leaning against the wall of the hut. The long sleeves of the banana swayed gently near the pine log upon which Mr. Maine was not at this moment resting.

The hound, hearing the slight sounds of her footsteps in the sand, lifted his head. His face brightened, and he rose with that solemn deliberation which is characteristic of a hound who is no longer young. He paced slowly toward the girl, who came forward with that lightness which is a part of youth.

The mother, looking at her, was immediately aware of a joyousness of aspect which differed from the happy expression which had belonged to her daughter for a few weeks now.

Mrs. Gerry smiled in response to the warm, eager smile on the young face

"Well?" she said.

Salome came and took the work from her mother's hands. Then she sat down on her mother's lap and clasped her arms about her neck. She was smiling all the time.

"Now, at last, I am of some importance," she said.

"Not until now, then?" was the questioning response.

"Of course you and father have loved me, and so I have been of importance that way," said Salome, "and I have been rather an important burden, haven't I?"

"Yes," drawing the slight form closer. "you have."

"But now I have arranged to help pay off the mortgage. I did not allow you to see father's last letter. I didn't think it was best. There it is. He was in trouble. Mrs. Darrah has lent the money. Father must have it by this time. That horrid Uncle John will get it all right. And I'm going to pay it. You see, I'm working. Work is a great thing. But I won't bother you; read the letter in peace." For Mrs. Gerry had seized the envelope eagerly.

"Lyman in trouble!" she said in a whisper.

Her eyes ran over the lines. Her hand trembled a little, but she steadied it.

When at last she looked up she could not see her daughter, who still sat on her lap, save in a misty and magnified fashion.

"It's a great deal better to owe Mrs. Darrah than to owe Uncle John, isn't it?" quickly asked Salome.

"Yes; that is, I can't tell. I must think," was the answer.

"Oh, yes, it is. And it gives me such a chance."

Mrs. Gerry wiped her eyes. Then she fixed them on the girl.

"This letter is more than a week old. And Lyman had to have the money directly," she said. "When did you arrange this?"

"Oh, immediately. Almost the moment I read it."

Mrs. Gerry, even in her surprise and anxiety, could not restrain an expression of something like admiration.

"I did not know you were such a business woman," she said.

"But something had to be done. And did you think I would not be a business woman, or something worse, so that I might help father? You see it has all come out right, hasn't it? We would rather owe Mrs. Darrah than Uncle John; and it won't seem so very long before I can pay it off."

Salome's face was radiant. She flung herself again upon her mother's neck.

"Now don't say a single 'prudent' thing to me. Just be glad it is arranged. I am responsible for this. It's the first really responsible thing I ever did, isn't it? I don't think you quite realize that I am grown up and that I am an individual."

"I think I shall realize it after this. I must go and see Mrs. Darrah."

"Yes, but not now," as Mrs. Gerry made a movement to rise. "You are to go at five this afternoon. She sent for you."

And at precisely five Mrs. Gerry was shown into Mrs. Darrah's sitting-room. She found that lady alone, and she was greeted by the following remark:

"Sit down, please. I am going to ask you a great many questions. I am laying out a new novel."

This was so very much different from what she had expected to hear, that Mrs. Gerry was not able to say anything at first in response. She sat down in silence.

"Yes," said Mrs. Darrah, "I am planning a new novel. I shall drop my story of sentiment for the present, or I may possibly work the two together."

"And what is the new one to be?"

Mrs. Gerry found it an effort to put this question. Could it be possible that she had been sent for to listen to this kind of talk?

She did not quite know what to decide concerning the woman before her. But she knew that she herself must say a few things. She began instantly:

"My daughter says you have been so kind as to——"

"Yes, certainly. I've lent her $800," interrupted Mrs. Darrah; "she will work it out—or part of it."

"My husband and I will give our note for the amount," said Mrs. Gerry with firmness, "and we will have the mortgage transferred to you. Then, in any event, you will not lose. It will be a great relief to us. I must say that my daughter should not have done this without consulting with her parents."

"Done what?" with a sharp look.

"Borrowed this money. I will attend to the mortgage."

"Very well, as you please. I have not the slightest doubt of your honesty."

"Thank you," stiffly.

"But I want to ask you some questions, Mrs. Gerry. Let us call it part of the bargain, if you please, that I ask you some questions. Shall we?"

"I see no objections. Though I can't imagine what you will want to know. And, of course, I must use my own judgment about answering."

"Of course," was the response; "and I can see that your judgment is excellent. But I am the most harmless creature in the world, Mrs. Gerry. Still I have my hobbies. Let me get my notebooks. I may need both the green and the blue one. I am immensely interested in your daughter. I want to make some inquiries about your father and mother, and about your husband's father and mother. I may even go so far back as another generation. Now, please don't think me demented, will you? No, you won't. Thank you so much for that. Were Miss Gerry's parents and grandparents, and great-grandparents all New-England people? That's a very general question to begin with, isn't it?"

WHERE THE HORSES RIDE ON STREET CARS.

From The Orange Belt.

At Ontario (Cal.) one may see the only street rail way in the world that is operated partly by horse power and partly by gravity. When the Chaffey brothers founded Ontario, San Bernardino County, they laid out a double avenue, 200 feet wide, with a space in the centre for a street-car line. This avenue is six miles long, running from the town of Ontario to the mountains, with a steady ascent varying from 100 to 250 feet to the mile. In December, 1888, the railroad was completed and horse-cars put on. A couple of ingenious mechanics, J. B. Tays and James Birch, decided that the horses might as well ride on the down trip, and accordingly designed a small platform car, which slides under the main car, for the descent. On this the horses ride down, the car running by gravity. The arrangement has been in successful use since March, 1889.

The down trip is regularly made in thirty minutes, but the cars sometimes come down in half that time without stops. The horses or mules take very kindly to the arrangement.

A BARON SENT TO PRISON.

COUNT GYULAI'S AMBITION FOR ORDERS.

BRUNO VON HARTUNG SUCCEEDS IN GETTING CONSIDERABLE MONEY FROM A WEALTHY NOBLEMAN.

Vienna, Dec. 17.—A sensational suit has come to an end in this city which places the bearer of an aristocratic name in an unenviable light and sends a man with the right to the title of Baron to prison. The cause of the disgraceful proceedings was the ambition of a Count to cover his breast with decorations which he could not obtain by merit, and to enjoy a distinction to which he had no right.

In August, 1891, Count Samuel Gyulai placed an advertisement in one of the best-known Austrian papers, saying that a wealthy nobleman desired to obtain "in an honorable way a position of honor, or eventually a decoration." Among the answers received by the ambitious gentleman was a letter signed by Bruno, Baron von Hartung, declaring that the writer possessed influential connections, and could obtain with ease an Austrian, Italian or German order. A visit followed the letter, and Hartung told the unsuspecting Count that he was the son of Baron Alfred von Hartung, a member of the German General Staff, who had intimate friends at Court. His aunt, Countess Dubane, he said, was a lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty, and had often secured decorations for friends of his father. Of the German decorations, however, the Hohenzollern Order was the easiest to acquire, as it was only necessary to dedicate a book or a poem to Emperor William. Hartung's father in Berlin would call the attention of His Majesty to the Count, and "all would go well with his praiseworthy ambition." It would be necessary, however, to send 200 gulden to the Berlin officer to "cover expenses." Count Samuel delivered the money to Hartung without delay.

About ten days had passed by when Hartung again called upon Gyulai and showed him a Berlin letter signed "Alfred." It said that it was a great mistake to suppose that the Hohenzollern Order could be secured for 200 gulden. First of all it was necessary to obtain "the favor of General Puttkamer, who had great influence in these matters, by making him a proper present." The Countess Dubane was to give the present to the General. Regarding the book to be dedicated to the Emperor, "Alfred" also had a wise suggestion to make. He was acquainted with a German professor who had recently returned from Africa and intended to publish an account of his investigations and adventures. The Count should purchase this book. To do so 400 gulden must be forthcoming.

The genial Count Gyulai cheerfully gave up possession of 400 gulden, for which he obtained a receipt. A few days later Hartung showed him a telegram, alleged to come from the German capital. The telegram read as follows: "Valuable package received. General and actor won. One to two months' patience."

But Hartung had other ways of "plucking" his generous and ambitious friend. A few days after the telegram had been read to the Count he asked Gyulai if he would not like to receive a Saxon decoration also. It could be obtained easily through Count O'Danne in Dresden. Gyulai thought it would be pleasant to wear a Saxon order also. Again a week passed by. At its end, however, a letter came from O'Danne with the cheerful news that he could get the "Orden des Rautenkrone" for 300 gulden, or the Albrecht Order for 600 gulden, with 400 gulden additional after the decoration had been placed on the Count's breast. Gyulai naturally decided in favor of the Albrecht Order, and gave the 600 gulden to Hartung. In the Count's presence the money was placed in an envelope, and he and Hartung went to the postoffice to place it in the mail. Hartung did drop the letter in the box, but returned the same afternoon to reclaim it before it had started on its journey to Dresden. On the following morning Hartung disappeared from the city. But he had not played all his cards.

On December 30, 1891, Gyulai received an important letter from Antwerp containing a printed slip of paper with the head line: "The Decoration Swindle of Count Samuel Gyulai in Vienna." The article told the whole story of the Count's attempt to obtain foreign decorations and spoke of the sensation which his actions had caused in Viennese society. The letter was signed by "The President of the International Reportorial Association," and declared that the article would be published in all Continental papers unless the Count compromised the affair by sending 3,000 gulden at once to Antwerp. After one week Gyulai received a letter from Hartung saying that members of the press had discovered the correspondence which had passed between them, and that "everything had been betrayed."

But Hartung had gone too far even for Count Gyulai, who became convinced that Hartung himself was the author of both the communications from Antwerp. He placed the case in the hands of detectives, who succeeded in capturing Hartung in Brussels.

In the course of the trial Hartung was particularly brazen. He boasted of his intimacy with the King of Belgium, and insisted that Emperor William of Germany should be summoned as a witness in the case. This suggestion was seconded by Hartung's counsel; but the Court, as a matter of course, declined to entertain it. The Court, as already mentioned above, condemned the scoundrel to imprisonment at hard labor for five years.

Bruno von Hartung is about twenty-five years old, and was born in Altona. He is the son of Alfred von Hartung, who was accused of treason in 1866. He was also a friend of Captain O'Danne, once an instructor of the Emperor of Germany, who has since then seen the inside of more than one prison.

A GOOD ROMANCER.

From The Minneapolis Tribune.

A rather shabby-looking stranger with long hair stood on the steel arch bridge the other morning and gazed up and down the river by turns. A dapper-looking gentleman with black whiskers and hair a la West Hotel barber shop paused a few feet from him and sniffed the gale, while a fox-terrier frisked about his feet. The stranger approached, and with the customary "Well, sir," reeled off the following: "It don't look much like it did—ty-nine years ago. The falls are scarcely recognizable. That island below the stone arch bridge was not there. But I was one of the fortunates, or rather unfortunates, who helped to create it. We were going down the river with a great raft of rough lumber and skins when our craft went to pieces on a huge rock which lay just beneath the water, unperceived. The river was running high that spring and our crew was all drowned. I was the only one to escape. But to pass from these sad reflections to my story. The sunken raft made a foundation for that wild looking little island which you see. Through long years driftwood and bits of earth and pebbles washed about and on the pile. The seeds of trees sprouted upon the curious formation, and their roots growing out in all directions served to keep the embryo island intact. The break in the falls in —ty-two hurled the large rocks to the unique position which they now occupy. A miniature island was thus created an'——"

At this point in the narration the dapper gentleman interposed an interrogation: "Are you looking for anything to do, stranger?"

"I am open for anything that turns up," was the ready answer. "I've just struck town and——"

"Never mind that, my friend. I have found a prize. My lecturer quit last night and I want a good man with a fancy like yours. Here's my card. Call after 10:30 a. m." The stranger took the proffered introductory ticket and read:

FRED A. PRIDE,
Manager Dime Museum.

THE COFFEE OF COBAN.

HOW IT IS GROWN—ITS REPUTATION IN EUROPE.

WAGES OF WORKMEN INCREASED—A RIVER LOST IN AN OLD-TIME CRATER—A SEMI-TROPICAL RAIN.

Coban, Guatemala, Oct. 30.—The coffee grown in the Department of Alta Verapez, known as the Coban or Verapez coffee, has a reputation in Europe equal, if not superior, to any coffee grown in any part of the world. It is hardly known, however, in the United States. Small assignments are sent to one enterprising firm in Boston, but it is said here that that firm never puts it upon the market, but uses it as a flavor to increase the value of a coffee which they claim to be of a superior grade. In the markets of Europe Coban coffee sells for fully one-third more price than any other Central American brand, and I think for more than any other brand, and the demand is always greater than the supply. Last year the owner of Arenal sold his crop for upward of forty thousand dollars, and Mr. Leipprand of Chicacao received more than fifty thousand dollars for the product of his finca. The profit is enormous, and a fortune is made each year. This is readily understood when we consider the production of a good finca and the cost of labor, which is almost the entire cost.

Wages are double what they were a few years ago, but at the increased rate, two reals (25c.) per day is the outside limit. The average picking is every other week. One week the trabajador works for the cultivador and the next week for himself, thus having time to cultivate his own maize and frijoles and the coffee of his cultivador. If he works 200 days upon the finca his wages amount to $40 a year. Two hundred laborers would earn $10,000 a year, and would raise 125 tons of coffee. This coffee will sell upon the finca to the agent of the European merchant for $28 a hundred, $560 a ton, $70,000 for the crop. Deduct all expenses, interest and labor, and at least $40,000 remains as net profit for the year. The profit of many fincas is much larger than this. Only a few months ago a finca in this Department was sold for $400,000, and the buyer illustrated Solomon's description of satisfaction, for when he was gone "then he boasted."

The best coffee lands are in the long, narrow valleys, ending in a more or less extensive circular plain called here a "pocket," inclosed by high mountains; the valley itself being not less than 3,000 and better if 4,000 feet above sea level, and the inclosing mountains from 2,000 to 4,000 feet above the valley. The valley and the eastern slope of the hill is always selected when possible. The sun coming over the eastern hills throws its earliest rays upon the western slope, quickly absorbing the dew, drying flower and fruit and shrub, exhausting much of its vitality, and destroying something of its aromatic qualities. On the eastern slope and in the deep valley the sun reaches the plants but slowly, the dew remains long on the leaf and stalk and flower, the juices are not exhausted but enriched by the increasing heat, the flavor is intensified, and the rich, aromatic berry is brought to full maturity under the most favorable circumstances of light, heat and moisture. Nothing can be imagined more delightful to look upon than a coffee plantation in the early morning.

As we slowly turned a shoulder of the mountain the valley in which the finca of Chicacao is located opened like a beautiful panorama below us. For at least a league the valley was full of mature plants, looking as if snow had been sprinkled by some giant hand over the entire length and had lodged in delicate lines upon the upper side of each willowy branch. It was a vast stretch of dark, glossy green streaked with even lines of white. At first it was hard to understand how this effect was produced, but as we descended the mystery was explained. The coffee shrub when fully matured is about 12 feet high. The central stalk is not more than three inches in diameter at the base and is straight to the very top. From this the branches extend on an average three feet, bending in a graceful curve, and from either side of these branches the waxy leaves, shaped like the leaves of the peach, droop as graceful pendants. The flower is upon the upper side of the branch, extending like a line of creamy white above the leaves the entire length of the branch, and usually along every branch upon the entire plant. Under the leaves are the berries in all stages of maturity, greens, reds, and shading into dark brown when fully ripe.

The preparation of a coffee plantation is not difficult, but requires great care, some capital and about four years of time before returns from the coffee can be expected. The land costs simply the surveying. The process is called "denouncing," and is similar to our system of pre-emption. The purchaser has the land surveyed, pays the bills, files the papers in the Government Land Office, and receives his certificate of title. Having secured the title, the next step is to prepare the land by thoroughly clearing it of its rank, wild growth. This is done at the same time the coffee plants are being prepared. The seed bed is a level spot carefully spaded until the soil is soft and free from roots, stones or lumps of earth. Into this the coffee bean is placed, and then the entire bed is shaded from the sun by an awning of leaves, usually banana or plantain, supported upon poles a few feet above the ground. The second year the seedlings are transplanted into a larger bed, or may be placed in their permanent position; but still they must be sheltered from sun and wind, and after the first year this shelter is usually given by setting banana or plantain suckers between the rows. In a few months these suckers grow into large plants, completely shading the ground and affording the very best protection to the tender coffee shrubs. At the end of the third year shade, other than such as the plants themselves afford, is dispensed with. The fourth year picking begins, and the eighth year finds the plant at full maturity and bearing abundant crops. The shrub continues bearing full crops until sixteen years old, and then comes gradual decay. A coffee plantation is rarely started at its full size at first. The beginning may be with a few thousand plants, according to the capital of the owner, and then increased a few thousand plants each year until the land is fully occupied. This was the course followed by Senor Leipprand at Chicacao, and now his finca is the boast and pride of the Department.

The peculiar geological formation of this portion of the Republic is interesting. A river, which comes plunging through an opening in the mountains, suddenly stops its headlong rush, sinks into a gaping mouth, and is swallowed out of sight forever. The earth settles into a funnel-shaped cavity with a small opening at its base, down which a silver thread of water is leaping into the darkness and mystery of a subterranean world. An opening in the face of a rock wall is the door leading into a cavern of unknown depth and extent. Just by the side of the trail—the trail turns to the right or left to avoid them—are openings like chimneys broken off at the ridge-pole or on a line with the roof, leading into other caverns. We dismount and look into one of these chimneys. Puffs of air come into our faces; we can hear water falling over mysterious precipices; strange sounds come to our ears and suggest a Cimmerian world where perpetual darkness reigns. This entire region is full of caves, unexplored, waiting for some adventurous Hovey to examine their unknown chambers, their mysterious halls, their winding passages, their Stygian lakes and unknown rivers, and then to tell the world by illustration and description the wondrous story of strange and beautiful forms which Nature by her artists time and water has here wrought in silence and darkness. Mammoth, Wyandotte and Luray are justly celebrated, but these caves in the mountains of Santa Cruz and De Chama must be on a grander scale if one can judge from the openings upon the surface.

About two leagues before reaching Coban we came upon a gang of workmen constructing a cart-road from that city, but to what point in the mountains we could not learn. The road was fairly smooth, about twenty feet wide, and we blessed the man, whoever he was, who instigated its construction. As we proceeded an occasional cabana warned us of our approach to the city, and further on horses and pedestrians bearing loads of charcoal, grass or corn, indicated that this was one of the arteries of commerce and trade, and that all interests centred at the same point.

It was nearly 4 o'clock in the afternoon when we felt ourselves really within the first and outer circle of city influence. For an hour the clouds had been rallying and massing, and we were hurrying our jaded animals to get under shelter before the storm came. Too late. We were still in the outskirts of the city when the clouds broke and poured out upon our devoted heads the accumulated weight of waters. Noah's flood wasn't anywhere. Forty days! In less than half of forty minutes the street was a watercourse, our horses were wading in a stream half up to their knees, and we were looking for some mountain to climb until the flood should abate. Fortunately we had our rubber blankets on our saddles; at the first sprinkle we threw them over our heads, and their size was so ample as to cover rider and mule.

The Doctor was in advance, and I followed at a respectful distance. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza never entered a Spanish city in such sorry plight, and yet there was so much of the ludicrous in our appearance that even the stolid natives risked the flood to enjoy the sight, and a group of Ladino youngsters appeared like professional contortionists as they wriggled around the butts of some cottonwoods and shouted at the drenched Americanos. Slowly and with funereal silence we rode through the long paved street, past the great cathedral, across the plaza, to the store of a German merchant, Mr. Desseldorf, to whom we had letters of introduction. Fortunately we found him at home, and he at once dispatched his servant to pilot us to a good hotel where "English is spoken." We found the hotel. It was a good one, kept by a Ladino woman who in carriage and physique was a model for a queen. The hotel is a harbor of refuge in a storm and a pleasant harbor now that the "storm has drifted by," but the English spoken by the queenly landlady is certainly not English as "she is spoken" at home.